

Chapter III

The Autonomy Question and the Concept of Human Nature

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Chapter III

The Autonomy Question and the Concept of Human Nature

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter it has been explained how autonomy as a key concept has a broad impact on different fields of Philosophy. The ethical ideal of autonomy analyses how people's personal experiences and values play the most important role in determining right and true for them. In this connection, it tries to give a thorough understanding of autonomy question. The present chapter attempts to associate or highlight the relationship between the concept of autonomy and the concept of human nature. It is also found that to explore the subject of human nature is very much challenging. It becomes a necessity in our times because of the misuse of the concept to promote a fatalistic and pessimistic outlook which prevents people from moral development step by step. It can be noted that human beings are much more than merely "self-centered, aggressive, and competitive". Present tendency is to misuse the concept of human nature. Therefore, this chapter also studies the concept of human nature, its development in philosophy as advocated by different thinkers' right from the beginning of the ancient Greek philosophers to the modern enlightenment thinkers. It also tries to see the link between the autonomy question and the concept of human nature.

3.2. Concept of Autonomy in Moral Philosophy

The word "autonomy", which comes from the Greek words *autos* (self) and *nomos* (law), denotes the absence of external constrain plus a positive power of self-determination.¹ The term "autonomy" literally means self-rule. In practice, the principle recognizes the respect for the decision-making capacity of competent adults.

The principle of autonomy recognizes the rights of individuals to self-determination. It is already rooted in the respect of the society for individuals' ability to make informed decisions about personal matters.

Autonomy as a key concept has a broad impact on different fields of Philosophy. In moral Philosophy, autonomy signifies the ability to impose objective moral law on oneself. It refers to subjecting oneself to objecting moral law. The idea of autonomy is always used as vitally important in recent ethical literature. The right of autonomy is a common theme. The right to direct one's own medical treatment is another focus is ideal of autonomy. It is too useful to sketch an account of autonomy which is useful in understanding its place in descriptive and normative contexts. There are many views about what constitutes autonomy.²

The concept of autonomy has tremendous importance in the field of moral philosophy. So far as etymology is concern as a reliable source one might accept autonomy to be above all self-legislation and self-governing setting down laws or rules for one individual. The more self-governing an agent is the more autonomous.³ Kant argued that autonomy is demonstrated by a person who decides on a course of action out of respect for moral duty.⁴ An autonomous person acts morally for the sake of doing 'good'. In this sense, autonomy literally signifies that the self has its own ethical law and it also generates its own standards of rightness and wrongness. Even though, in principle, I should respect the autonomy of others as I live out of my own autonomy, but in practice an autonomous mindset predisposes me to be unconcerned about how my actions will affect other individuals.

Kant points out that moral agent are autonomous only if they do not allow other individuals anything to do. The moral law is defined as pure practical reason to guide individual decisions. In his book, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of*

Morals, Kant points out that an autonomous moral agent subject only to laws given by himself but still universal and that he is bound only to act in conformity with his own will, which however in accordance with nature's end is a will giving universal law. An autonomous moral agent, according to Kant, must be at the same time in the same respect will the universal law as they are willing the maxim that can be abstracted from the principle of their action.

Autonomy means willing the universal law when one wills one's action. Kant names this principle of moral action as the categorical imperative. For him, the autonomous persons are not merely persons capable of choosing and executing their decisions, but also persons who can choose the correct way in accordance with the categorical imperative and within the structures of practical reason. An autonomous person is free as one's will and bound only by his or her own will and not by the will of other individuals. The authority of the principles binding one's will is also not external to his or her will. It means individual actions express one's own will and not the will of somebody else. So, autonomy ensures that the source of the authority of the principles that bind his or her in their own will. In this sense, idea of autonomy can be seen as the view that the moral law is just a principle. Therefore, the moral legitimacy of the Categorical Imperative is grounded in its being an expression of individual's own rational will.

The ethical ideal of autonomy analyses how people's personal experiences and values play the most important role in determining right and true for them. Governing one-self is an exercise of autonomy. The primary notion of autonomy is that of a complex characteristic of the agent which manifests itself both in behavior and in certain attitudes, beliefs and desires. As a conceptual pillar of enlightenment modernity, the concept of autonomy has been the leading idea in defining human

identity. It brings in the justificatory ground that we ought to respect an individual's and people's autonomy in their ethical decisions as a matter of principle.

3.3. Autonomy in Bioethics

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary field of study dealing with practical ethical issues roughly at the interaction of morality, medicine and life science.⁵ The term 'bioethics' was coined in the early 1970s by biologists who brought to the public's attention two pressing issues: the need to maintain the planet's ecology, on which all life depends, and the implications of advances in the life sciences toward manipulating human nature. In his book, *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, published in 1971, Van Rensselaer Potter focused on the growing human ability to change nature, including human nature, and the implications of this for our global future.⁶

Although bioethics as special area of study is interdisciplinary, it can be seen as a branch of ethics, and more specifically a branch of applied ethics. It deals with the problems in biomedicine. Some bioethicists would restrict only to the morality of medical treatments or technological innovations, and the timing of medical treatment of humans. There are few others who broaden the scope of ethical evaluation to include the morality of all actions that might help or harm organisms capable of feeling fear. In most recent years the field has returned to the wider context provided by the life scientists of the early 1970s, including their environmental and public health concerns.

Bioethicists often disagree among themselves over the precise limits of their discipline, debating whether the field should concern itself with the ethical evaluation of all questions involving biology and medicine, or only a subset of these questions. The central issues in bioethics were research with human subjects, genetics, organ

transplantation, death and dying, and reproduction. In addition to its initial focus on ethical issues relevant to clinical care, bioethics concerns the moral, legal, political, and social issues raised by medicine, biomedical research, and life sciences technologies.⁷

Bioethics was focused primarily on issues arising out of the physician-patient relationship. The ancient Hippocratic literature was not merely limited to the Hippocratic Oath which encourages physicians to use their knowledge and powers for the greater interest of sick person to heal and not to harm them anyway. The physicians' duty was to preserve their patient's life, and also to keep the information of the patient's confidentially, which not to be spread about. These basic values and principles remain as an essential part of contemporary bioethics.

The concept of autonomy has tremendous importance in the field of moral philosophy. It is developed in both the field of moral philosophy and bioethics. But there is a significant difference between the meaning and history of the concept of autonomy in moral philosophy and its appropriation in the normative and applied work of bioethics. This difference is often overlooked, and the deployment of autonomy in bioethics has usually been presented as the straightforward 'application' of a philosophically grounded concept and principle to particular cases or decision making situations.

Autonomy has long been an important principle within biomedical ethics. The increasing importance of autonomy also can be seen as a social reaction to a 'paternalistic' tradition in the domain of healthcare. Some people have questioned whether the strong reaction against historically excessive paternalism in favor of patient autonomy has inhabited the proper use of soft paternalism to the detriment of outcomes for some patients. Respect for autonomy is the basis for informed consent

and advance directives. It is a general indicator of health. It is studied that there are so many diseases are characterized by the loss of autonomy, in various manners. This implies that autonomy is an indicator for both personal well being as well as for the well being of the entire medical profession.

In the biomedical context, respect for a patient's personal autonomy is considered one of most fundamental ethical principles. Here autonomy is defined as the ability of the person to make his or her own decisions. This idea was developed in the last 50 years which is considered essential for present practice of medicine. Nowadays, the medical practice has moved away from paternalistic traditions, in which doctors or other professionals were treated as the proper judges for the best interests of patients. Improved recognition and respect for patients' rights and insistence on the ethical significance of securing their consent are now viewed as standard and requisite ways of securing respect for patients' autonomy.

In bioethics, autonomy does not only apply in a research context. The users of the health care system have the right to be treated with respect for their autonomy. Harry Frankfurt considers that an action can only be considered autonomous if it involves the exercise of the capacity higher order values about desires when acting internationally.⁸ It means that patients may understand their situation and choices. But it would not be autonomous unless the patient is able to form value judgments about their reasons for choosing treatment options autonomously.

Again, Animal Liberation is another very important problem discussed in bioethics. The moral status and treatment of animals has been a lively debate in contemporary bioethics. Although the treatment of human beings in research has been a domain of public debate, the treatment of non-human animals is also wide spread. Animals are routinely killed, maimed, shocked, burned, and caused terrible pain, in

the name of scientific and medical progress.⁹ Bioethicists examine various justifications for inflicting pain on non-human animals. It studies the moral unacceptability of animal experimentation.

In bioethics, concept of autonomy has a key value. In the contemporary development of bioethics, no other concept has been more important. The concept of autonomy better reflects both the philosophical and the political currents shaping the field. The concept sometimes also referred to as ‘self-determination’ or ‘respect for persons’, and it has played a central role in the modern field of bioethics. So, among the several important moral principles, the principle of respect for personal autonomy is another important principle in the field of biomedical ethics.

The prominence of autonomy in biomedical ethics can be traced back to the Belmont Report.¹⁰ In this report, the congress had instructed the Commission to identify the basic ethical principles that should underlie the conduct of biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects. The Commission also articulated three basic principles namely, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. The articulation of these principles had a major impact on the development of bioethics. These concepts found their way into the general literature of the field, and evolved from the principles underlying the conduct of research into the basic principles of bioethics. In this way the concept of autonomy become an unquestionably a central principle in bioethics.

Respect for autonomy is one of the most frequently mentioned moral principles in the literature of bioethics. The terms ‘Autonomy’ and ‘respect for autonomy’ are loosely associated with several ideas like privacy, voluntariness, self-mastery, choosing freely, the freedom to choose, choosing one’s own moral position, and accepting responsibility for one’s choice etc. It is also conceived as a principle rooted

in the liberal western tradition of the importance of individual freedom and choice, both for political life as well as for personal development.

Respect for patient's autonomy is now fully integrated into the practice of medicine. In the clinic, the patient's right to accept or refuse medical care changes the balance of power in the physician-patient relationship and engages the patient more fully in ownership of care plans. Shared decision-making has become the norm, and it is viewed by the patient and the physician as essential for honoring the individual and his or her dignity.

Another most familiar tool for extending autonomy is the advance directive. In a particular situation, we also extend autonomy by empowering others to speak on our behalf when we cannot. It may be done formally, through a durable power of attorney, or informally, when we ask family and other close relatives to serve as our voice when we cannot speak for ourselves. While doing this we are still invoking autonomy in principle, as care is to be guided by our wishes. We just seek someone else's help to speak for us. In ethical terms, we seek a substituted judgment, which requires specific personal knowledge of the individual and his or her wishes.

The extension of autonomy has been promoted vigorously in the case like end-of-life care, but with mixed results. The deference to the wishes of the patient and his or her family is a valuable starting point for all end-of-life care situations. As the end of life approaches, the domains over which the patient or family can exercise control diminish to the vanishing point. In this situation, it is reasonable to ask whether it is even possible for a human being to exercise autonomy in any meaningful way when someone is nearing to death. Autonomy at the end of life is not universally valued by patients and families. University of Michigan law professor Carl Schneider, in his book begins by saying that "my point of departure is the substantial number of

patients who seem reluctant to make their own medical decisions.¹¹ The psychiatrists and clinical psychologists are also often asked to evaluate a patient's capacity for making life-and-death decisions at the end of life by considering autonomy as a parameter for health care. On the other hand, who have the mental ability to make the decision of end-of-life have the right to refuse treatment and choose an early death. In such situation, psychiatrists and psychologists are typically part of protecting their right.

There is a patient-centered medical ethics that emphasizes autonomy rights over professional obligations of beneficence when they conflict. The rise of autonomy has brought from unprecedented challenges to the medical professionals. For example, when patients insist on decision-making authority, it is tempting to defer to them. However, the approach like "it's your decision" can be a form of abandoning the patient. In this case, the physician may feel that without full authority to make decisions. Rather he or she should not assume responsibility for outcomes. The physician may dispense with some of the soul-searching about the right course of action. He may think that the patient will decide what he wants. Such reasoning, coming from our strong reliance on patients' autonomy may have taken some of the joy out of the practice of medicine.

Autonomy is also important within the disability rights movement. Within the disability rights movement, the slogan, "Nothing about us without us" is a call for autonomy or self-determination.¹² This movement works for rejecting the decisions made by others for those people with disabilities. It also speaks for the desire of empowerment and recognition as being agents capable of self-determination.

In bioethics, another important approach to autonomy is the relational approach. This approach has become popular in the spheres of health care ethics and

disability theory. The language of relational autonomy has been helpful in reframing the dichotomy between strict independence and dependence. It also provides a way of framing the relationship between a person with a disability and his or her caretaker or guardian.

The issue of autonomy is also considered from the perspective of moral psychology. Mental illness clearly can rob a person of the capacity for autonomous choice and action. It is also true that this has been exaggerated in the past by prejudice and stigmatization. What, then, is the correct attitude to take toward those suffering from mental illness? Jeanette Kennett reminds us that ‘agency comes in degrees, that autonomy is an achievement, and that respect for autonomy may require our active support for the agency of those in adverse circumstances’, including mental illness.¹³

Again, in many end of life situations, we primarily witness some unfolding clinical story. The clinicians may turn to the family for a decision to withhold or withdraw aggressive medical care. This approach is consistent with respect for patient autonomy. It may set the stage for conflict. Here the word ‘decision’ implies that there are options for handling the clinical situation, perhaps more than actually exist. Asking for a decision may give the family the uncomfortable and erroneous feeling that something they choose to do may cause the death of their loved one. Our choice of words is important. This is known as autonomy at work.

Of course, many issues in bioethics concern failures to respect autonomy, ranging from manipulative under disclosure of pertinent information to non-recognition of a refusal intervention. To respect an autonomous agent is to recognize with due appreciation that person’s capacities and perspective, including his or her right to hold certain views, to make certain choices, and to take certain actions based on personal values and beliefs.

The concept of autonomy in ethics as well as bioethics has a close association with human nature. Hence the study tries attempts to associate or highlight the relationship between the concept of autonomy and the concept of human nature. Now, before knowing the relationship between autonomy and human nature, an attempt has been made to explain the concept of human nature and its different kinds advocated by different philosophical systems time to time.

3.4. Human Nature: An Overview

Human nature is the general inherent character or innate disposition of humankind.¹⁴ The Webster's Dictionary defines of human nature as "the essential essence of who we are collectively as human beings." It means the traits, behaviors, and characteristics are essential to become a human being as a matter of natural fact. It cannot be changed without making us other than the sort of being we are. In other words, some people might have a broader definition of human nature and say that everything that humans do is within our nature.

The concept of human nature has been explored by philosophers of all ages. It is often considered as something different from the rest of the world, as it has an exception or a special situation. Traditionally, it was thought that human beings were at the centre of any kind of creation. It was also believed that human were intended to dominate the earth. It was treated that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that human beings are in the natural order of things. They were above all other creatures of the universe. So much depends on our conception of human nature; for individuals the meaning and purpose of our lives, what we ought to do or strive for, what we may hope to achieve or to become; for human societies, what vision of human community we may hope to work toward and what sort of social changes we should make. Our awareness to all these huge questions depend on whether we think

there is some 'true' or 'innate' nature of human beings. If so, what is it? Is it different from man and woman? Or there is no such 'essential' human nature.¹⁵

The debates about human nature have revolved around the most basic questions of philosophy, since ancient times. These questions are like- Are human beings essentially spiritual beings or primarily physical and rational beings? Are people basically good? Are human actions determined or does free will exist? Does human nature change? etc. It is clear that all the questions on Human nature figures prominently in ethical theory. Again, another most fundamental question for all of us today is what is man? This question is so much depends on our view of human nature. The meaning and purpose of human life, what we ought to do, and what we can hope to achieve are fundamentally affected by whatever we think is the 'real' or 'true' nature of man.¹⁶

Therefore, human nature can be regarded as both a source of norms of conduct or ways of life, as well as presenting obstacles or constraints on living a good life. It caused humans to become what they become, and so it exists somehow independently of individual humans. There are so many conflicting views about human nature. In contrast, recent sociological theorists have treated human beings as a product of evolution, with our own biologically, species-specific patterns of behavior.

There are different conceptions of human nature which lead to different views about what we ought to do and how to do it. A system of beliefs about human nature that is held by some group of people as giving rise to their way of life is standard called an 'ideology'.¹⁷ An ideology is more than a theory, which involves some theoretical conception of human nature. Christianity is certainly ideologist in this sense.

Although it is very difficult to establish what kind of object of an enquiry human nature might be, a search for a political theory which contained no explicit or implicit assumption concerning the nature, meaning, and purpose of human life at its core would be fruitful. For example, the more common Christian understanding of human nature stresses the notion of free will and man's ability to love, which reflects the image of God himself.¹⁸ Another example of a theory of human nature is based upon the fear of sudden death and drive of self-presentation. Jeremy Bentham was influenced both by Hobbes's account of human nature and Hume's account of social utility. According to Hobbes, specific desires and appetites arise in the human body and are experienced as discomforts or pains which must be overcome. Thus, each of us is motivated to act in such ways as we believe likely to relieve our discomfort, to preserve and promote our own well-being.¹⁹

Hobbes also points out that everything we choose to act is exactly determined by the natural inclination to relieve the physical pressures that interfere in our bodies. So, human volition is nothing but the determination of the will by the strongest present desire. In this way, Hobbes has appreciated the account of human nature which emphasizes our animal nature. For him, leaving each of us is to live independently of everyone else, acting only one's self-interest, without considering for others. Again, the Hobbesian diagnosis of what is wrong with human nature is that man follows his natural, unsocialized drives which lead to the war of everyone against everyone.²⁰ Hobbes suggests that there is no such inherent goodness of human being as fundamentally selfish.

In the theories as we have discussed above, it is found that observation of the past and present offers a very useful tool for the evaluation of human nature. To arrive at a clearer understanding of human nature, we have to make a historical survey. The

survey will include the ancient Greeks thought, the world religions, and the Enlightenment thoughts including modern day scientists regarding human nature. Let us try to observe their various perspectives. These observations also reflect essentiality of human beings. In the theories of actual human nature, it is stated that the end of social engineering is not to change human nature but to create conditions to take advantage of it. On the other hand, there are theories of potential human nature. The theories of potential human nature usually discuss the concept of human nature in terms of capacities and possibilities. The potential theories of human nature are based on the assumption that human beings have significant and unrealized potentialities which could be developed under encouraging circumstances. The actual nature of man is deformed and mutilated by the contingent processes or arrangements that now exist.²¹ Therefore, unlike the theory of actual human nature, in the theories of potential human nature observation of past and present does not offer a tool for evaluation of human nature. Rather, the past and present reflect a systematic suppression or violation of potential human nature. So, the fundamental tenet of this theory is that human nature can be changed only the process of social engineering.

In the theories of actual human nature, human nature of course can be changed, but it happens because of the individuals themselves normally involve in an evolutionary process. On the other hand, in the theories of potential human nature, human nature is changed because of a social engineering happens normally in a revolutionary process. Therefore, it is observed that the difference between the theories of actual and potential human nature is not based on the question whether human nature is changeable; since both usually assume that it is putting aside extremely conservative theorists. Rather, the difference between the two theories is

expressed in their separate answer offered by each theory regarding the question of who can change it.

Contemporary secular western philosophy is unable to give a canonical moral account of human nature. It is unable to show why human nature must remain as we find it. In order for the current design of human nature to be regarded as morally normative, one would need to show either (1) that the process of its design was such as to convey intrinsic moral significance to the design, or (2) that there are properties of the design that show the design to have an absolute moral claim on us.²²

Again, human nature as a biological structure and as the biological substratum is the basis for human psychological and sociological phenomena. It is the result of mutations, accidental events, the constraints of biochemistry, genetic drift, natural selection, and other natural forces. So far as natural selection has worked well, it has adapted us to past environments, that environment in which we no longer live, though it is now in the process of adapting us to the environments in which we find ourselves. Persons in self-consciousness make themselves their own objects; in self-consciousness, they judge themselves. In everyday life, one experiences the body as something to be improved. Medical technology has extended this sense of the body as manipulable.²³ In short, there are number of circumstances in which persons critically realize their human nature and reflect on how it might optimally be revised.

However, apart from the western tradition, there are some other conceptions of human nature. Amongst them Chinese, Indian and African conception of human nature is still very much important, active and alive. We are not extending our studies at this level by including these theories.

3.5. Different Theories of Human Nature

The definition of human nature includes the essential characteristics namely, feelings, psychology, behaviors shared by all human beings. All of us have different experiences of the humans in our day to day life, and because of these different experiences the disputes develops. Some people will advocates that human beings are ‘good’ or ‘bad’, or ‘predators’ or ‘capable of great kindness.’ These opinions are biased by the influence of the people whom we know and what their culture and subcultures inform about its particular ideas about what makes humans ‘a human’ in a real sense.

Human nature is a unique concept which refers to the distinguishing characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling and acting that humans tend to have naturally, independently of the influence of culture. The questions of what these characteristics are, what causes them, and how fixed human nature is, are amongst the oldest and most important questions in western philosophy. These questions have particularly important implications in ethics, politics, and theology.²⁴ Human nature can be regarded as both a source of norms of conduct or ways of life, as well as presenting obstacles or constraints on living a good life. Of course, there are so different conflicting views about human nature. In contrast, human beings are treated as a product of evolution by the resent sociological theorists, with our own biologically, species-specific patterns of behavior. There are multiple branches of humanities together form an important domain of inquiry into human nature, and the question of what it is to be human. The important areas of contemporary sciences are also associated with this study.

There are deferent philosophers and scholars of deferent period generally who are inclined to discuss about human nature based on the main schools of thought from

the human history. Some religious thinkers have argued that spiritual or religious natures are the main individual characteristics in human nature. For example, Judeo-Christian tradition advocates human beings are the creations of God who have free will. Their free will provides them both dignity as well as various ethical dangers. Buddhists also thought that to be human is to be conscious and to wish. Again, in Western cultures, these discussions usually developed with Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. According to Plato, human beings were rational, social animals. He had related our nature with our souls and ability to reason rather than our bodies. Aristotle, on the other hand, was differs primarily in his opinion that our body and soul both are contributed to human identity. Of course, these theories are not mutually selected to each other, but they have been built upon each other and adapted extra time. In this chapter, an effort has been made to discuss different theories of human nature. The chapter discusses Ancient Greek thoughts, Religious thought, Rationalist view, Empiricists View, Kant's view, Marxists thought, Existentialists thought, Modern empirical science thought, Marxian view of human nature, Structuralists and Poststructuralists view of human nature, etc.

3.5.1. Greek View of Human Nature

Socrates (469-399) was a great Athenian figure. Being a rationalist philosopher he believed that the best life and the life most associated to human nature involved reasoning. Socrates emphasized the relevance of living honorably or justly to the idea of living well.²⁵ Socrates turned his philosophy from the study of the heavens to study of the human things. He has studied the question how a person should live best live. Socratic approach on the subject of human nature generally considered to be a teleological approach which came to be dominant by late classical and medieval periods. This approach understands human nature in terms of final and formal causes.

Such understandings of human nature perceive this nature as an 'idea', or 'form' of a human. In this sense, human nature really causes humans to become what they become. So, human nature exists somehow independently of individual humans. It has sometimes understood as a special connection between human nature and the divinity. The most influential version of the traditional theory of human nature views the primarily as a thinker capable of reasoning. This view is illustrated in the thought and writing of the great philosopher Plato.

Greek philosopher, Plato (427-347) occupies an important place among the non-religious theories of human nature. In the different field of philosophy, the theories of the ancient Greeks, especially of their great philosophers namely Plato and Aristotle still influence us today. Plato being one of the pioneers to argue that the open minded but systematic use of our reason can show human beings the best way to live. According to him, the only answer to individual and social problems is a clear conception of human virtue and happiness, which is based on a true understanding of human nature. Plato also emphasized the social aspect of human nature. We are not self-sufficient, we need others, and we benefit from our social interactions, from other persons talents, aptitudes, and their friendship. Plato retained Socratic faith in rational inquiry; he was convinced that it was possible to attain knowledge of deep lying truths about the world and about human nature and to apply this knowledge for the benefit of human life.²⁶

The *Republic* of Plato is the most famous dialogue. It develops many of the great philosophical issues including what the best form of government. It also develops what is the best life to live, the nature of knowledge, as well as family, education, psychology and many more. It also expounds Plato's theory of human nature. Plato held that the truth about human nature involved knowledge of another

world of reality. In his *Republic*, Plato gives an outline of an ideal human society.²⁷ But the central argument of *Republic* is at least as much about individual human nature and virtue. The most important role in Plato's theory of human nature and society is played by the moral application of the theory of Forms. In fact, the theory of Form is one of the first and greatest expressions of the hope through we can attain reliable knowledge about the world as a whole. It also provides us reliable knowledge about the goals and proper conduct of human life and society. According to Plato, man is a rational as well as social animal. He liked to identify our nature with reason, and our souls, as opposed to our bodies. For Plato, we have a philosopher soul, a guardian or warrior soul, or an artisan soul. Who am I is depends upon what kind of a soul I have. In this way we should play a general role in the society. Our success or failure in life solely depends upon in what sort of society we live. For Plato, human life needs to be political. It should be spent in the discovery of the proper manner in which sociality ought to be organized, and also in the practical implementation of that ideal in our own societies. Plato points out that we are rational and social creatures in the society. We must live in the real or ideal society in order to become what we really are. Essence is grasped by rational analysis, as it is separate from change.

Plato is a dualist. For him, there is both immaterial mind and material body. It is the soul that knows the forms. The soul exists before birth and after death. He believed that the soul or mind attains knowledge of the forms, as opposed to the senses. According to Plato, there are thus three different aspects to our mental nature. When these three aspects are not in harmony we experience mental conflict. Emotion or passion can be on the side of either reason or the appetites. We might be pulled by passionate love, lustful appetite, or the reasoned desire to find the best partner. We should care more about our soul rather than our body. He believed that we are

essentially immaterial souls and our distinctively rational nature lies beyond scientific investigation. According to Plato, the human soul exists before our birth. The soul is indestructible and will exist internally after death. Again, in the *Phaedo*, Plato presents a number of other arguments that the human soul must persist after the death of the body. In his *Philebus* and the *Laws*, Plato also advocates human nature as divided into two ways between reason and pleasure. Of course in the *Gorgias* and *Protagoras* he says more about pleasure. The remaining feature of his theory of human nature is that we are ineradicably casual to live in a society. It is a nature of human beings. For Plato, human individuals are not self-sufficient. Each of us has many different needs which we cannot meet by ourselves. What is good or bad for us depends on our human nature, the complex factors in our psychological makeup.

Although Plato did not think reason as the sole constituent of human nature, he accepted it as the highest part of human nature. Based on which part dominates, we get three kinds of people, whose main desires are knowledge, power and wealth respectively. Plato holds that humans can control their appetites and their aggressive impulses by the use of their reason. Plato used his own image of the charioteer (reason) who tries to control horses representing emotions and appetites. Plato also emphasized the spiritual aspect of human nature. He says that reason uses the spirit or will to control the appetites. Nowadays we usually divide these as reason, appetite, and will. Plato also emphasized the social aspect of human nature. We are not self-sufficient, we need others, and we benefit from our social interactions, from other persons talents, aptitudes, and their friendship.

According to Aristotle (384-322), the philosophical study of the human nature itself originated with Socrates, who turned philosophy from study of the heavens to study of human things.²⁸ For him, compared to other animals' reason is not the only

quality that is most special about humanity. Reason is also the power of human. Human nature is an example of a formal cause. Aristotle's view is differs from Plato in many ways. Aristotle advocated that human reason can discover the truth about human nature and how we ought to live. For him the truth about human nature required only knowledge of our own world. In the philosophy of Aristotle, the idea of the good for human beings is best described by the term *eudemonia*.²⁹ Here, Aristotle finds the relevant meaning of the notion of the good in the study of 'human nature' and also of worldly existence. In his naturalistic theory, Aristotle also clearly explained an understanding of things in human beings in terms of their goals which they want to pursue and the functions that they are designed to perform.

According to Aristotle, man is a rational as well as a social animal. He believed both body and soul were parts of our nature. Without a society, we wouldn't 'be' human but a God or a beast. For him the self is also something we realize by the specific way we actualize our natural potentialities which is predominated by virtues or vices. Aristotle points out that rationality are our nature, because rationality is our natural function or telos. Telos is its nature of a thing. Rationality sets us apart from other animals, it makes us human. Natural things achieve success in life by fulfilling their function or telos. Unlike animals, we must choose our course and life. Therefore, the basic human demand is determining the correct choice.

From the above study it becomes clear that Both Plato and Aristotle emphasis reason as the most important feature of our human nature. Reason is certainly more important than our desires and aggressiveness. According to them, reason is that what is unique in human beings. It makes us unique and different from all other animals.

3.5.2. Religious Thought on Human Nature: (Judo-Christian Tradition)

Islam is often seen as the oriental, which is closely related to Judaism and Christianity in its origins. Christianity contains a theory of the universe, a theory of human nature, a diagnosis, and a precipitin. The Christian doctrines have developed over two thousand years ago. Initially there were three main divisions of Christianity. They were namely, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism. There are many more subdivisions and differences of Christianity apart from these three divisions. In the first book of the Hebrew Bible, the opening chapters of *Genesis*, narrate a story of the divine creation of the whole world, including human beings. The Hebrew conception of humanity observes us as existing primarily in relation to God, who has created us to occupy a special position in the universe. We have a certain degree of power over nature. We domesticate animals and grow most of our food by agriculture. Mankind is made in the image of God, to have dominion over the rest of creation.³⁰ Human beings are unique in the sense that we have something of the rationality and personhood of God. We are rational beings and at the same time we are also persons. Being a person we have self-consciousness, freedom of choice and the capacity for personal relationships and love. According to Christianity, God created us for fellowship with himself. We can rely the purpose of our life only when we love and serve our creator. In this way, Christianity is of course committed to belief in God, as a personal being. God is omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good, who created and controls everything that exists.

According to Christianity, man is made in the image of God. Mans' fate depends on his relationship to God.³¹ Each human being is free to accept or reject God's purpose, and it will be judged accordingly how he exercises this freedom. In Christianity it is stated in the Bible that Adam's disobedience corrupted human nature

but God mercifully regenerates. Regeneration is radical changes that involve a renewal of our nature.³² Thus, to counter original sin, Christianity purposes a complete transformation of individuals by Christ.³³ Of course, it is surely a misinterpretation of the Christian conception of human nature to identify the distinction between good and evil with between our mental and our physical natures.

According to the Judo-Christian tradition, humans are made in the image of God. For them, humans are like 'Divine' beings because they contain something of the ability to love and know that characterizes their creator. In the scriptures of Judeo-Christian tradition, God is portrayed as saying "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness". The Hebrew Old Testament contains a passage where humans were created. Here God said that let me make humankind in my own image and likeness. God must have control over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, all the wild animals and every creature that moves very slow on the earth. The ability to love and know will and intellect are the distinguishing characteristics of human beings. Finally, these make human being 'like' God. The two purpose of life namely living God and serving God are open to all. It does not matter whatever their level of intelligence is or not.

According to Judo-Christian tradition, our free will is a creation of God. They advocate that human freedom as a gift from God. It is something which gives human beings dignity. Of course, God's gifts are never without their dangers. Sons of God are the images of God. The Judo-Christian concept is that we are essentially symbolizing beings, makers and readers of signs. Success in life requires submission to God's will. We should submissive to God in order to gain His divine help to realize the meaning of our lives by using our reason and memory. God has created the world so that we can return to Him. The human life is truly religious. It is a life which can

be lived while submitting to God's will. Therefore, success in our life depends upon choosing the good over evil. According to Judo-Christian tradition, to make this choice we must be able to read signs of God in a correct way. Human beings are God's creation. God created people in his image and he guides our lives in the destiny he has in mind for us. However, only God only can show his plan, and that is why we need to believe on God and His authority to direct our choices properly. God created humans with a free will, but they must be guided by moral teachings.

But although human beings are thus seen as having a special role compared to the rest of Creation, we are at the same time continuous with nature. We are made of "dust from the ground"³⁴ that is of the same matter that composes the rest of the world. However, it is a common and recurrent misinterpretation of the biblical doctrine of human nature that it involves a dualism between the material body and an immaterial soul or spirit. It is not been found in *Old Testament* as well as in *New Testament*. The idea of dualism is a Greek idea. *The Bible* contains no single "doctrine of human nature". Rather it provides material for more philosophical descriptions of human nature.³⁵ From this discussion the most crucial point comes out from the biblical understanding of human nature is the notion of freedom. Here freedom is conceived as the choice between the obedience of God's will, faith in Him, and loves for Him or disobedience, faithlessness and pride.

3.5.3. Rationalist View of Human Nature

Rationalism is the theory according to which reason or intellect is the main, if not the only source of valid knowledge.³⁶ According to rationalism, the human self is essentially active and rational and our sensations are accidental. Our knowledge is actively produced by the self out of its own inner ideas with the help of reason. In this sense, reason is the true essence of the self.

Socrates and Plato were the earliest rationalistic philosophers. According to them, true knowledge originates in reason. Rationalism formulated by Socrates and Plato became increasingly articulate and popular in the philosophies of Renee Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. The rationalist philosophers differ amongst themselves regarding the proper function of sense experience. But it is considered by all rationalists that our knowledge derived through the exercise of reason unaided by observation. It is absolutely certain and perfect. True knowledge must be universal and necessary, according to the rationalists' philosopher. Descartes being a through going rationalist divided ideas into three kinds. They are adventitious ideas, factitious ideas and innate ideas. The innate ideas according to him are clear and distinct and implanted in the human mind by God at the time of his or her birth.

3.5.4. Descartes View of Human Nature

The first philosophical figure of the modern European era was Renee Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes expanded Plato's ideas, describing people as thinking spirits. According to Descartes, human being is an immaterial mind. The essential nature of the mind is its conscious ability to think. This mind which has its conscious ability to think is very different from the body where it resides. Being one of the iconic personalities in the seventeenth century scientific revolution and a path founder of the modern scientific method, Descartes systematically explains the traditional view of human nature. In the analysis Descartes mentioned that a human is composition of two different kinds of things, one is a material body and the other is an immaterial mind or 'soul'. The metaphysical account of human nature as consisting of body and mind is one of the most importances of his philosophy. The critique philosophers mostly advocate this view of Descartes as 'dualism' because it claims that humans are made up of these dual substances, namely body and mind. According

to Descartes, body and mind are two distinct but interacting substances, which can exist separately without the other. Therefore, every human being is having selves that are immaterial and essentially conscious. This self can exist without the body, which is material and essentially conscious.

Elaborating the concept of human nature and preparing the way for the increased interest in ethics and human behavior that is typical of modern thought, Descartes has shifted his focus of philosophy from metaphysics toward the human self. According to him, since our bodies aren't required for thinking, we are thinking spirits or thinking substances. Descartes advocates that our body occupies a separate space and it is subject to the same laws of nature that science studies. But the body does not have any kind of mental properties. According to him, it is our mind or soul which can only think, feel, perceive and decide what to believe and what to do in our life. In this sense, the soul is incorporeal. It is not made up of matter. The soul or self does not occupy any space. For him the soul cannot be studied by the scientific methods.

Descartes was thus led to make an absolute distinction between humans possessing souls and other animals, who in his view lack all consciousness, even sensations, perceptions or emotions.³⁷ In his great work *Discourse on Method* (1637), Descartes gives a preliminary exposition of the ideas of human nature. Here Descartes argues that whatever else one may doubt, one cannot doubt his or her own existence as a conscious being. Again in his another great work, *The Meditation*, Descartes argued how he thinks the immateriality of the soul can be proved by reason. In his part-V of the *Discourse*, again Descartes developed another empirically based argument for dualism which also explains the behavior of human and animal. He argued that there is a sharp distinction of kind rather than degree between the innate

mental faculties of humans and all other creatures, picking out language as a distinctive component of human rationality.³⁸

Descartes also developed the notion of 'Angelism' by making human beings as angels. Gilbert Ryle, another great critique of Descartes, described this notion of Descartes' human by pointing out it as the "ghost in the machine." The self is the mind or consciousness. I cannot doubt the existence of my mind or consciousness, but, I can doubt the existence of my own body. In the 6th chapter of his great work, '*Meditation*', Descartes argued that mind-body union is constituted by what the scholastics called a 'substantial union'. It is the union that form (mind) has with matter (body). According to Descartes, this kind of substantial union produces a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. The capacity for modes of sensation and voluntary bodily movements are new properties of the whole, which essentially combined mind and body. Therefore, the 'Cartesian' problem of mind-body efficient causal interaction is not accepted as a whole, since the efficient causal occurrences between mind and body does not play any role while explaining the existence of these modes.

In this way, Descartes separates the human mind from the body and also establishes that there is life after death. Our success in life acquiring certainty and that requires the correct use of our thinking powers. According to Descartes, this kind of enterprise is ultimately an individual one, undertaken outside of society, and outside of nature. He points out that our self is autonomous, but alienated. This is a philosophical approach towards our life. Our life presents us so many pieces of 'knowledge'. Our primary duty is that we must approach it with the method of radical doubt in order to find out what is certain and what to believe. In this sense the foundational certainty is one's own existence. Apart from the self, everything else in

our life is less certain, including the existence of God. Rather we can infer that God exists, and through that the rest of the world only from our existence and its characteristics.

3.5.5. Empiricist View of Human Nature

The eighteenth century philosophical movement in Great Britain is mainly signified by the British Empiricism. The British Empiricist advocated that all of our knowledge comes from sense experience. The empiricists also rejected the concept of innate ideas advocated by the Rationalists, another group of advocator of knowledge and argued that our knowledge is based on both sense experience and internal mental experiences, such as emotions and self-reflection. Three prominent philosophers of west were associated with British Empiricism. These Philosophers were namely, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. Of course, the nineteenth century philosopher J.S. Mill is also joined with this later on.

John Locke's philosophy of empiricism also saw human nature as a tabula rasa. According to him human mind is at birth a "blank sheet" without rules, so data are added and rules for processing them are formed solely by our sensory experiences.³⁹ Again, another British philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), was an influential figure of the eighteenth century movement of thought in the Enlightenment philosophy. David Hume proposed to reform the traditional thoughts and practices. It is done by the application or reason to human affairs through his writings. Being a thorough going empiricist, Hume also advocates that all our knowledge about the world must be based on experience. In the introduction of the *Treatise*, Hume maintains that scientific advance will come only through an accurate and comprehensive conception of human nature. His *Treatise* is significantly subtitled

“An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental (i.e. Experimental or Empirical) Method of reasoning into Moral Subjects (i.e. theorizing about Human Nature).”⁴⁰

David Hume was a critic of the over simplifying and systematic approach of Hobbes, Rousseau and some others thinkers of that time. These thinkers were pointed out that all human nature is assumed to be driven by variations of selfishness. In this context, Hume observed that humans are distinguished by their own capacity for benevolence. Hume advocated that our feelings of benevolence and sympathy are universal tendencies of human nature. Human being has a natural concern for the welfare of others. They only they care about themselves. In this sense, Hume advocated self love as a powerful principle of human nature.

Hume also accepts that for many economic and political subjects, people could be assumed to be driven by such simple selfishness. He praises “some late philosophers in England, who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing” and declares his intention to build upon their work.⁴¹ Hume also points out that no philosopher would apply himself so earnestly to the explaining the ultimate principles of the soul. It establishes Hume, as a great master in that very science of human nature. Hume also pretends to explain what is naturally satisfactory to the mind of man. He farther believed that our concept of human nature is the proper focus of the philosophers. For him the very first principles of human nature necessarily carry over to every human endeavor, cognitive and conative alike. A careful and exact experiments, and the observation of the particular effects based on different circumstances and situations can only leads to the exact nature of human nature.

3.5.6. European Enlightenment and Human Nature

Again the thinkers of European Enlightenment has believed in science and reason and provoked extreme desire to know about human nature. This desire occurred from the European long journey of discovery, the meeting the conflict of 'primitive' peoples, and challenging new truths from the microscope and telescope. According to the Enlightenment philosophers, God became more distant receded into the background and philosophers tried to understand how human beings survived in a natural state before the civilization. Many of them agreed that people had the quality of free will and reason. They have disagreed on other human characteristics. Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu advocated that human beings were social, cooperative, considerate, and unselfish. There were loyal in the state of nature. However, Hobbes mentioned that humans are aggressive, self-centered, greedy, and fickle. The basic question of these philosophers was, "When evil exists? Is it a result of evil in human nature" or it is a result of evil in institutions.

3. 5.7. Kantian Thought on Human Nature

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is one of the greatest philosophers. In his two great works namely, "*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*" (1798) and "*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*" (1793), Kant has developed his idea of human nature.⁴² In his late work *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant continued to wrestle with the most profound problems of human nature. He talks of the radical evil in human nature, using almost biblical language. For him what are radically evil are not our naturally given desires. It is not the tension between these desires and duty. Kant calls it rather the depravity of human nature. While philosophizing about human nature, Kant also rightly transformed Rousseau's idea on human nature, culture, education and history. He advocated his noble philosophy of

treating all persons with equal respect. Unfortunately Kant did not accepted women or member of non-white races, as fully rational persons with equal civic rights.

According to Kant, the respect for all rational beings implies the recognition of the rights and needs of all human beings. In this regard Kant was mostly influenced by the Judeo-Christian ideal of love for one's neighbor. There is a "radical evil" in human nature. This radical evil according to Kant, consist in the tendency to prefer one's own interests over those of everyone else. Of course this is consistent with saying that we also have a potential for goodness and love. Among the living beings that inhabit the earth, man is easily distinguished from all other natural beings by his technical predisposition for manipulating things, by his pragmatic predisposition, and by the mental predisposition in his being. And any one of these three levels can, itself, already distinguish man characteristically from the other inhabitants of the earth.⁴³

3.5.8. Existentialist View of Human Nature

In the middle of the twentieth century, another very important view of human beings became active in the traditional western view of human nature. This view is popularly called as existentialism. According to this theory, humans are whatever they make themselves. They did not accept any essential human nature in the traditional sense. Rather they insist that every individual creates his or her own nature through the free, responsible choices and actions. There is nothing like a fixed rational nature and a fixed purpose of humans.

There are three main concerns that are central to existentialism. Out of these three, the first one is related to individual human beings. There would be general theories about human nature leave out precisely as advocated by existentialist philosopher. The most important in existentialism is the uniqueness of each individual

and importance of his or her life situation. Secondly, existentialism is a seriously concern with the meaning or purpose of human lives. The scientific or metaphysical truths are less important for them even if these issues are also about human beings. Thirdly, in existentialism, there is a strong emphasis on the freedom of human beings. It supports each individual's ability to choose his or her attitudes, purposes, values and actions of life. Therefore, the typical existentialist view is that which is freely chosen by each person is the only true and authentic way of life.

Existentialism begins in subjectivity. This subjectivity gives the dignity to the human being by distinguishing the human being from rest of the things. Human beings are not an object but a subject. Being human I have no essence. So, there is nothing that I am. According to the Existentialists the self is not a stable, predefined entity which lasts through time. Human self is a creation. One must make and remake from moment to moment. In this sense, the human being is nothing but what he or she makes himself or herself. Sartre advocates that the human being is radically different from objects. The objects possess a meaning simply for what they are while the significance of human being is never simple but it is always in a process.

According to existentialism, human beings are absolutely free. They are absolutely free in the sense that they have to determine the meaning of the situations in which they find themselves. I cannot change the facts about my life, but their meaning is always open to reevaluation. Existentialists argue that human beings are condemned to be free. There are no moral supports or justifications on which we can base our decisions. There are no a priori goods or eternal values or norms we can adhere to. Human beings are completely abandoned in the world with nothing to fall back on. It is because of our consequence of our absolute freedom we are also absolutely responsible for our all kinds of decisions.

The Existentialist also claims that the human being lives in anguish because there are no preordained laws or values. As a human being we live in a hopeless situation. There is no possibility of values in the world if God does not exist. Therefore, as human we have to create values. According to the Existentialism, human beings are thrown into a world which we did not create. But we must be responsible for everything we do in our life. So, the human being as analogous to the work of art. It is seen that, in art there are no pre-defined rules. There are no a priori aesthetic values and presumably it is the same for moral choice. So, in art and morality we have to deal with two creation and invention. Sartre points out that man makes himself and he is not found ready-made. Man makes himself by the choice of his or her morality. But in any pressure of circumstances upon him man can not choose morality.

Existentialist claims that being human we are responsible for ourselves as well as for all other fellow human beings. By choosing anything, we have to choose it for all human beings. Our bad faith is refusing to accept others freedom and responsibility. We have to conceal it, when we face our freedom. Human beings are not cowards. Every human being can try to conceal their freedom only to certain extent that they can easily recognize it. According to existentialism, one would be in bad faith if he is treated himself as determined, predicting his future actions solely depending on his past choices. When we treat ourselves as determined by past choices then we also treat ourselves just as a thing and not as a human being. In this sense, facts never determine our future. We can always choose to react against the facts.

3.5.8.1. Jean Paul Sartre

Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) was the most important twentieth century philosopher of France. Apart from an important novelist and playwright and

biographer of that time, Sartre was classified as a prominent existentialist. Being an existentialist thinker there are at least three things in Sartre's philosophy. Firstly, he was basically interested the uniqueness of an individual life, but he was not interested to any abstract theories about a shared human nature. Secondly, Sartre tried to find the meaning of life from a subjective point of view. Thirdly, he developed the freedom to choose one's projects, meanings, and its values. In this way, Sartre developed his thinking by focusing on individual freedom, and he also tried to explore the social and economic limits of human freedom.

According to Sartre, there is a distinction between human consciousness and inanimate non-consciousness. This distinction is not in between two different substances. It is also not a mind-body dualism, but a distinction between "two modes of being." One is that way how the conscious beings exist. That means being for itself and the other way is the existence of non-conscious things, that means being in itself. Sartre points out that, consciousness is always about something, including sometimes itself, whereas inanimate things are not conscious. On the other hand, the main foundation of Sartre's philosophy is his thoroughgoing atheism. According to him there are no transcendent values, and no intrinsic meaning or purpose for our lives. Life is absurd, we are alone. We have to grow up and choose our own values and projects by our own. Therefore, the meaning of human life is not something already discovered. Human life is something that we create. It is we who need to give meaning to our lives.

Sartre doesn't believe in a human nature or essence nature that precedes individuals. According to him, our existence precedes our essence. We have to create our own essence. Neither God nor evolution, created human beings for any definite purpose other than the purposes we choose. Of course Sartre recognizes that human

beings are biological beings, but there are no general truths about what we should or ought to be. According to Sartre, the most basic thing we can say about humans is that they are radically free, to be anything except to not be free. They can choose anything except choose not to choose. Sartre points out that human beings are “condemned to be free.” For Sartre, the concept of nothingness or negation relates to human freedom. He farther mentioned that negation implies our freedom of mind and of action.

Sartre rejects Freud’s concept of psychic determinism. He also did not agree with the idea of the unconscious as advocated by Freud. According to Sartre, we choose our mental states like emotions. However, this view may be true but not all the time. Sometimes other emotions of human beings, like concern and care, seem to be a most important part of our nature. Sartre also thought that our character traits are based on choices. For example, I am not shy; rather I choose to be shy. Even if we know enough about biology to know that it’s not the whole truth. According to Sartre, when we make resolutions our radical freedom is evident. I face my freedom because my past resolution doesn’t constrain me. In this particular situation, we don’t know what we will do or what to do. When we confront with our freedom it naturally brings anxiety.

Sartre points out that human beings are radically free. Our existence precedes our essence. But, it is true that existence is prior to essence. Man is responsible for what he is. No one will ever be able to explain one’s own actions by simply reference to a given and specific human nature. Sartre says that the human being is distinct from plants and animals. Because plants and animals merely exist without any consciousness about their existence. While human beings are conscious of their existence. Existence of human being takes priority over whatever he or she might be otherwise existence of human being takes precedence over essence.

Sartre, being the chief exponent of atheistic existentialism claimed that humans as condemned to be free. According to him, humans are free because they can never rely on God. God does not exist. As human being we cannot rely on society to justify our actions or to tell us what we essentially are. Sartre believed that there are no true, universal statements about what humans ought to be. Rather he made at least one statement about the human condition that every human is free. In his famous work "*Existentialism and Humanism*," Sartre vigorously expresses the existential view of human nature.⁴⁴ He held that that every individual person is completely free to decide what he or she wants to be and do. Sartre also mentioned that there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it.

In this way Sartre developed a profound challenge to the traditional view of human nature. Being an atheist Sartre differs from Marx, because atheistic Existentialist is famous for saying that there is no human nature, no human essence. According to them existence precedes essence. Sartre said that our nature is not determined by our society, or by anything else. He points out that one can be without being something. There is no human nature because we are at originally free. According to him, every individual person is completely free to decide what he or she wants to be without any constrain.

It is because of his ideas; Sartre became a very public French intellectual for the rest of his life. He denies that there is no such thing as 'human nature'. As an existentialist thinker it is a typical rejection of general statements about human beings and human lives. Sartre expressed it in his great formula of existence precedes his essence. For him, as human we have no 'essential' nature and we have not created it for any particular purpose. We are existing by no choices of our own. Each of us must try to create his or her own 'essence'.

3.5.8.2. Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was another influential figure in existentialism. Being an atheist, Nietzsche is famous for his declaration that “god is dead.” According to him, in western culture religion no longer plays a very significant role. We need to find the meaning of human life without invoking gods. Nietzsche points out that we must create our own values and we must become supermen who reject conventional, religious values. We always try to overcome the kind of slave morality and exert our will to power it is the “master morality”. In this regard, Nietzsche also tries to investigate some subjective phenomena namely, emotions, will and consciousness.

Nietzsche also believes in human excellence and points out that we are profoundly self-ignorant and need other people to help us and realize our virtue. He believes human nature is just a less offensive synonym for inability, cultural conditioning, and what we are prior we make something of ourselves. Nietzsche says that progress is achieved mostly by a few exceptional human beings who subjected themselves to prevailing norms. Nietzsche himself broke a new shape and some of the new patterns he helped to create were inappropriate situations in the extreme.

3.5.9. Marxism and Human Nature

Karl Marx (1818-1883) occupies a pivotal place in the history of the international socialist movement. As an integral part of his philosophical system, he developed a materialistically based theory of ethics in which the prevailing moral principles of any historical period were seen as reflection of the underlying economic process and the interests and aspirations of the dominant social class.⁴⁵ Marx also claimed to be founder of a new science of human nature. The most distinctive aspect

of Marx conception of human nature is its social character. His combined practice to inspect human nature and scientifically drew a conclusion that human nature whose core is life activity from one's own initiative. According to Marx, the human characteristics are summarized as the totality, hierarchy and practicalness. His theory of human nature plays an important role in learning the history of the primary stage of socialism in the right way.

Marx has worked all his life for the emancipation of mankind as well as explored human nature. He has not merely explained human phenomena, but also applied his theory to liberate from the social or mental forces which prevents their free development. According to him "The real nature of man is the totality of social relation", wrote Karl Marx in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁶ According to Marx, there is no such thing as individual human nature. All human activity is socially learned and determined by the kind of society that people live in. He denied the existence of God and held that each person is a product of the particular economic stage of human society in which he or she live. Marx combined the study of human nature with practice. According to the principle history is created by practice, at the same time it is improved by changing, Marx explored the subject of human nature correctly, scientifically and fully.

Marx explained the specific content of human nature from three levels in his three important works. In *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx said "all of one kind, class attributes of the species on the nature of life, and the class attribute are the free conscious activity."⁴⁷ In *Theses on Feuerbach* he said: "Feuerbach attributed the essence of religion to human essence. However, inherent in human nature is not a single person of abstract, in fact, it is the sum of all social relations."⁴⁸ Again, in *The German Ideology* he said: "What they need is their

nature.”⁴⁹ These three aspects of Marxism on human nature are organically unified as a whole. The main issue of the books can be simply summarized as that the core of human nature is the free vital movement and the fundamental motivation and ultimate purpose is meeting the entire requirement of human. The manifestation of human nature is the unification of social attribute and natural attribute.

According to Marx, humans are natural producers. Their production is completely determined by historical conditions. For him, humans are also species beings. Here Marx’s intention is to focus on classes and groups, but it is quite unclear what to say about his theory of the self. History will unfold according to its own laws. Marx argues that we can only hasten the inevitable revolution where all alienation and false consciousness will disappear. According to Marx, human nature cannot be discovered from production, nor can production be discovered from human nature.

The philosophical foundation of Marxian studies of human nature follows from the description of labor. He tried to explain the fundamental attribute of human nature by comparing humans with animal labor. According to Marx, human production is free, conscious and intelligent. The comprehensive and free conscious life activity is the fundamental attribute of human nature. It is at the same time the fundamental characteristics to distinguish animals from humans, which contrary to this fundamental attribute is human. Here according to Marx, human freedom is not our general understanding of individual freedom with society, but human freedom is showing beyond all other animals. It is the production out of the immediate needs of the flesh and the human species which multiply the need for truly free production. Once labor has lost freedom, there is no creativity and it is forced to a stage of painful labor.

Marx's comment on human nature is also seen in *The German Ideology*. In *The German Ideology*, Marx made an explicit statement on human nature that what is distinctly human, are not just animal. According to him, Human can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else we like. The reason for nature species' existence is to their meet specific demand. There are fundamental differences between human and animals. The animal production is unconscious. When they obtain their foods they just get a physiological satisfaction. On the other hand, human beings are conscious. The humans not only obtain their material needs, but also the spiritual satisfaction. In this sense, human production is the activity of creating new lives. On the other hand, animal production is one sided and narrow. It is only happened when it is required by the renewal of life and species. Marx argues that human production is a kind of comprehensive activity. The purpose of human being is to create a new world through social work to meet the basic human requirements. There are various kinds of human requirements and all these are accelerated because human life activities are comprehensive. Therefore, Marx points out that meeting the Omni directional needs of human is the final purpose of human nature. It is also the fundamental driving force of human nature.

According to Marx, humans have both natural attribute as well as social attribute. The natural attribute of human beings is the ability to change the nature. Marx reconsidered labor as the medium between human and nature. He believed that through labor, humans are changing nature as well as themselves. At the same time, they also have their social attribute. Therefore, People according to Marx, can't exist in the world as an individual. Every person has the common nature of human being. The human beings are the aggregation of each individual. So, labor makes a person to become a society people. For him, People's labor is reflected not only in their own

physical strength, but also in their human nature. Human labor is social no matter in content or existing method and it is a kind of social activity. According to Marx, “nature is the link among people in society; and nature is the foundation of human existence. Therefore, human is the unity of society and nature.”⁵⁰ So, it is observer in Marx’s analysis the unity of the nature and society is the manifestations of human nature.

According to Marx, human nature is the nature of itself. It is the unity of natural attribute, social attribute and spiritual attribute. So, it cannot be attributed to nature. The human nature based on social relationship and it puts an end to the traditional way of abstract understanding of human nature. Marx developed his idea that the essence of human nature is the sum of social relationships. Here Marx partly absorbed the Platonic concept of human nature. For Plato different people have different nature and the development for everyone is the complement of each kind of human nature. From this concept of Marx, two important points are coming out. Firstly, human nature is an overarching concept. Secondly, human nature can be realized only through society. Marx’s theory of “total person” is about the person completely socialized. So, the socialized human nature is the sum total of all personality. In this sense, Marx’s view of human nature makes humanity more realistic and comprehensible to achieve a revolution on concept of human nature.

There are two different levels of human nature as advocated by Marx. First one is the general human nature, and the second one is the specific human nature which showed in different historical periods. So, before we know someone, we must study the general nature of him first. Here knowing the nature means knowing the needs is human nature. But what are the specific needs to meet those specific needs, which are determined by people’s social and historical conditions. It would be meaningless

according to Marx, if we know only the general human nature and unable to know the specific human nature. It can be found only from the society where he or she lived in. From the society we can know the likings of every generation. So, human nature can be revealed only in the society. According to Marx, human nature is always specific. No human can live without social relations. In this way, Marx developed his concept of human nature from the point of view of social relations and daily lifecycle of human beings.

According to Marx, there is no changeless human nature which is applicable to all ages. He always talks about human nature from practice. Marx also believes that the different level of development of man makes different human nature. So, there are different characteristics of man and their nature. Marx points out that the human nature is developed practicalness with the development of social practice. Here Marx is talking about a realistic person, so that the human nature is also about the human nature of reality. The people are engaged in various social activities, so that the changes of production mode and its relations will inevitably lead to the changes of human nature.

Marx also has denied the existence of God. While rejecting God, he has pointed out that each person is a product of the particular economic stage of human society in which he or she lives. Marx also rejected the idea of life after death and any such eternal judgment. Individual freedom is also rejected by him and says that individual ideals and attitudes are determined by the kind of society we live in.

Over many years, Marx had discussed the concept of human nature and gradually developed his theory of human nature that emphasized man's free and productive capacity. In the Capital Marx affirms this theory and synthesizes it with his entire view of human nature. Marx advocated that man can produce with ingenuity.

They will produce for their subsistence and free expression. Free and conscious production of human serves to gratify himself and also his fellow man, and while doing this one confirms what is singularly human. Human nature is considered to be a unique to the homosapiens in the Marx's concept of human nature.

In the year 1845, Marx and Engels in their first book, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism*, have explicitly referred to human nature. In that book they have used the notion of human nature in order to refer the alienation under the capitalist mode of production. Here they have advocated that human nature is to be the antithesis of the estrangement and degradation that the laborer feels under the capitalist mode of production. It is negated in the conditions of life that capitalism requires them to labor under. Of course, Marx taken his concept of human nature from his *Notes on James Mill* and merging it with his theory of alienation developed during the previous year.

It is noteworthy that a Marxian theory of human nature has been and rejected by many notable Marx scholars, "Tom Bottommore, Robert D. Cumming, Eugene Kamenka, Louis Althusser, Vernon Venable, Robert Tucker, Kate Soper, Colin Summer, and Sidney Hook; to name but a few."⁵¹ But, any theoretical speculation that Marx makes regarding the uniqueness of mankind has potential use in the development of a Marxian theory of human nature. The great psychologist Freud also believed that the Marxists were right to focus on the decisive influence on which the economic circumstances of men have their intellectual, ethical and artistic attitudes. According to Freud, Marxist view of the class struggle was too shallow. Behind the class struggle there stands the struggle between father and son, between established clan leader and rebellious challenger.

3.5.10. Human Nature and Modern Empirical Science

Again, another alternative kind of materialist view of human nature is Behaviorism. Being developed as a school of psychology, Behaviorism is restricted to the study of humans and particularly the human behavior. This theory holds that traditional ethics should be replaced by an objective science of behavior. That kind of objective science of behavior should be applied to the ills of society and foster moral behavior in individuals.⁵² Behaviorism, as an ethical theory builds upon the prescriptions and insights of psychological Behaviorism. This theory also argues that the only effective means of solving individual and social problems is by implementing environmental conditions which systematically encourage 'desirable' behaviors of human being and discourage the 'undesirable' ones. But, according to the Psychological behaviorists they could not observe states of consciousness and therefore psychology should not be concerned with them. There are some philosophers who have agreed with this view of psychological Behaviorism. The groups of philosophers have argued that we should restrict ourselves to the study of the physical behavior of human beings that is publically observable when we explain human nature. For them we can easily explain the mental activities in terms of human behaviors.

The last Harvard psychologist is B. F. Skinner (1904-1990), who is also primarily responsible for the development of modern behaviorism. He leads the behaviorists program to new height of technical exactness and become one of the most influential psychologists of his contemporaries. He tried to apply his theories to human life and society in *Science and Human Behavior* (1953), and to human language in particular in *Verbal Behavior* (1957).⁵³ According to Skinner, the only way to arrive at a true theory of human nature is the empirical and scientific study of

human behavior. He claims that human behavior is explainable in terms of operant conditioning and scientific claims that “biology is destiny” and that “genes hold culture on a leash.”⁵⁴ Science is a search for order for lawful relations among the events in nature. Scientific method has established itself as the proper way of understanding and explaining the world. According to Skinner, the basic human nature is a potentially confusing combination of methodological perception as well as an empirical theory. Both these theories are derived from the Western behaviorism.

Again, Skinner has great faith in science. He believed that only science can tell us the truth about nature, including human nature, and he made audacious claims for the potential of science to solve human problems.⁵⁵ According to him most of human behavior does not refer to the in born potentialities. Rather they refer to the effects of environmental variables on behavior. Skinner also points out that the basic qualities of human nature are neither good nor bad. These qualities are the results of complex environmental interactions. He also made some challenging claims for the potential of science to solve the human problems. He says, ‘It is possible that science has come to the rescue and that order will eventually be achieved in the field of human affairs.’⁵⁶ Skinner argues that fundamental to science is neither instruments nor measurement but the scientific methods. Belief in God is without any scientific basis. It treats religion as merely as a social institution for manipulating human behavior. Skinner thought that all those questions about human nature and about what is worth doing or striving for can be answered scientifically.

In this way, modern biology and psychology offer a variety of allegedly scientific theory about animal and human nature. In this context we have examined Freud, the French existentialist philosopher Sartre, American psychologist B. F.

Skinner, among the twentieth century thinkers who claimed to have the key to the human behavior and its conditions.

Another central theory of human nature can be found in the thought of Konrad Lorenz, an American biologist. Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989), was one of the founding father of the branch of biology called 'ethology'.⁵⁷ The etymological meaning of the term 'ethology' is the study of character. It stands for one particular tradition in the scientific study of animal behavior. The early ethologists' points out that different animal behavior patterns could not be explained in the behaviorists' way. The ethologists have emphasized on these 'instinctual' behavior patterns and thought its important carefully to observe the behavior of animals in their natural environment before intervening to perform their experiments. The ethology is based more directly than behaviorist psychology, on evolution. Therefore, it seems the appropriate place to sketch the essentials of the Darwinian theory of evolution, as because; no adequate theory of human nature can neglect it.

Konrad Lorenz was a result of the great scientific and cultural traditions of Vienna. As a biological scientist, the most important of his background assumptions is the theory of evolution. As an ethologist, Lorenz has introduced two very important concepts of a fixed action and an innate releasing mechanism. For them, the behavior seems to be caused by the combination of external interest and internal state. Lorenz says that any one piece of behavior is usually caused by at least two drives or inner causes and that conflict between independent impulses can give filmless to the whole organism, like a balance of power within a political system.⁵⁸

Konrad Lorenz also tried to explain the concept of human nature in the background of Darwinian understanding of evolution. For holds that human beings are one particular animal species that has evolved from others. Advocating the theory

of human nature, Lorenz points out that like many other animals, we have an innate drive to aggressive behavior toward our own species. In his theory, Lorenz suggests that it is the only possible explanation of the conflicts and wars throughout all human history. It is the continuously existing unreasonable behavior of supposedly reasonable beings. According to him, Freud's theory of the death instinct is an interpretation of the same unattractive fact of human nature. Lorenz seeks an evolutionary explanation for our innate aggressiveness and for its peculiarly communal nature. He speculates that at a certain stage of their evolution, our ancestors had more or less mastered the dangers of their nonhuman environment; the main threat facing them came from other human groups.⁵⁹ In this sense, Lorenz also tried to explain what he calls "militant enthusiasm", in which a human crowd becomes excitedly aggressive against another group perceived. They also work as alien and lose all rational control and moral inhibitions. This tendency as Lorenz refers has evolved from the communal defense response of our pre human ancestors. However, the evolutionary theories of Lorenz who inquire into human ethology or sociobiology have been criticized by those who maintain that apart from the most obvious biological universals. For him, like eating, sleeping and compulsion, human behavior also depends on culture which is much more than on biology.

3.5.11. Modern Science's Concept of Human Nature

There are so many different varieties of thinkers since the raise of modern science in the seventeen century, who has tried to apply the methods of science to human nature. The prominent thinkers amongst them were Hobbes, Hume and the French thinkers of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Of course, more recently, Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) theory of evolution have fundamentally affected our understanding of ourselves. Darwin is very much crucial to all theorizing about

human nature. In his great classic, *The Descent of Man*, published in 1871 Darwin expressed his speculation on the development of human moral and intellectual faculties. In this book he has developed an evolutionary approach to the human nature. While explaining this theory, Darwin advocated a commonly well accepted scientific argument that humans and other animal species do not any truly fixed nature, at least in the very long term. In this way Darwin has given a new way of understanding in modern biology and pointed out that human nature exist in a normal human time-frame, and also shown how it is caused.

There is nothing special about where we are. There is also nothing special about what we are as humans. With the publication on October 24, 1859, of Charles Darwin and A. R. Wallace's *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*, we move toward seeing our nature itself as a result of change.⁶⁰ Rather than a sudden arrival of human nature from the gods, we have been offered a sudden arrival of man, and selection in relation to sex. Therefore, the sexual selection was seen as having fashioned of the character of human nature, but not any divine wisdom provided by god.

The idea developed by Darwin is very much significant and from this the concept of human nature has become historically important. According to this idea each human being shares with every other human being but with nothing else some essential human making feature. This idea also long back mentioned by Aristotle. According to Aristotle each and every species was defined by an essence. A species was a set of properties found in each individual of the species. That essence makes it the short of creature that it is. So, there is no such uniformity as like human blood type or eye color found in human moral feelings, mental abilities or fundamental desires. In addition to this, from the theory of Darwin's evolution it becomes that that

human nature is not special, but the continuation of a biological nature which is common to all species. Of course, despite all the evidences, the idea that man has a special place in the universe is still continue.

Again, Sigmund Freud, a twentieth century psychologist has revolutionized our understanding of human nature through his psychoanalytic speculations. In that period, psychology has established itself as an independent branch of empirical science. Psychology at that time was institutionally demarcated from its early philosophical ancestry. Psychological understanding of the question of human nature is very much important for us to have a proper scientific understanding of the concept. Most academic psychologists have been chary of talking as general as 'Human nature'. Being the founder of Psychoanalysis, Freud, popularly referred to the hidden pathological character of typical human behavior. According to Freud human nature is essentially in conflict consisting of an unconscious mind i.e. our old biological instincts transformed in the name of civilization, an Ego and the Superego. He believed that aggression was a major element of human nature which enables survival, but that is sometimes accompanied by violence.

Another important ambitious theory of human nature that presents a challenge to moral philosophy is developed by a Harvard biologist Edward. O. Wilson. In his book '*Sociobiology*' Wilson defines human nature as "The systematic study of the biological basis of all forms of social behavior in all kinds of organisms, including man."⁶¹ Wilson has developed his idea which is closely associated with evolutionary psychology. He also offered some scientific arguments against the tabula rasa hypothesis of John Locke and Rousseau in connection with human nature. In his another book *Consilience: the Unity of Knowledge* (1998), Wilson also elaborately discussed the concept of human nature. In his writings Wilson has proposed for a kind

of cooperation of all the sciences to explore the concept of human nature. He farther advocated that human nature is a collection of epigenetic rules, the genetic patterns of mental development. Our cultural phenomena and rituals are not the part of human nature. They are merely products.

3.6. Concluding Observation

Human nature is a concept which breaks down the boundaries between the sciences and humanities. Social and political problems around the world exclaim something for a better understanding of human nature. More often the technical problems are designed to solve, but what looks as if it is unable to overcome are the political, social and psychological obstacles. In the near future our ability to constrain and manipulate human nature to follow the goals set by increasing persons will. As we have developed the capacities to engage in genetic engineering, not only of somatic cell nuclear transfer but also of human germ line, we will be able to shape our human nature in the image and connection of goals chosen by persons. If there is nothing inviolable about human nature, there is no reason why it should be radically changed. It means there should be with proper reasons and with proper concern. In this critical assessment of nature, we gain a clear understanding of the remark of Protagoras, “Man is the measure of all things, of existing things that they exist, and of non-existing things that they exist not.” It is persons who are the measure but persons.⁶²

From the above discussion it is found that human nature is a unique concept which refers to the distinguishing characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling and acting that humans tend to have naturally, independently of the influence of culture.

As we have seen above, there are deferent philosophers and scholars of deferent period generally who are inclined to discuss about human nature based on the main schools of thought from the human history. Some religious thinkers have argued that spiritual or religious natures are the main individual characteristics in human nature. However, as the Chapter intends to show, the basic theoretic lead in framing human nature was based on some hard and pre-given mode of understanding.

The Chapter, therefore, brings in the Structuralists and Poststructuralists View of Human Nature, which adds to the concluding observation another theoretic front of the study, that is, human nature and metaphysics. The chapter incorporates the anti-metaphysical stance of Structuralists and Poststructuralists View on human nature in order to strengthen the narrative of the concluding observation of the discussion.

As the Structuralists attempted to synthesize the ideas of Marx, Freud and Saussure, they argued that the individual is shaped by sociological, psychological and linguistic structures over which one has no control. In other words, they argued that human culture may be understood by means of a structure, modeled on language (i.e., structural linguistics) that differs from concrete reality and from abstract ideas, a "third order" that mediates between the two.⁶³ According to the structuralists, the human nature is not fixed and essential. They advocates that human nature is determined by specific historical structure the interests and understandings of human beings. Human nature is largely determined by a collective identity, which, in turn, is defined by the economic system as a whole. Structuralism also advocates both a science and ideology.

The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault, who was originally labeled as a structuralist, later on is seen as the most prominent representative of the post-structuralist movement. Foucault agreed that language and society were shaped

by rule governed systems, but he disagreed with the structuralists on two different grounds. Firstly, he did not think that there were definite underlying structures that could explain the human condition. Secondly, Foucault also thought that it was impossible to step outside of discourse and survey the situation objectively. Poststructuralists like Roland Barthes and Derrida have critiqued the structuralist premises to offer a new way of studying how knowledge is produced. They have argued that our history and culture condition the study of underlying structures. But both are subject to unfairness and misinterpretations. Therefore, a post-structuralist approach argues that it is necessary to study the object itself and as well as the systems of knowledge which produce the object to understand an object more clearly.

What is being intended to be challenged is the view that human nature exists somehow independently of individual humans. As the study in the present chapter makes a review of the concepts of human nature since Greek concepts of human nature and thinkers like Plato who emphasized the social aspect of human nature and accepted reason as the highest part of human nature. According to the Judo-Christian tradition, humans are made in the image of God. God created people in his image and he guides our lives in the destiny he has in mind for us. The Bible contains no single “doctrine of human nature”. The Bible, in this regard provides material for more philosophical descriptions of human nature.

According to rationalism, reason is the true essence of the self. The essential nature of the mind is its conscious ability to think. Classical empiricist like John Locke saw human nature as that which has been constituted by our sensory experiences. Again, Marx’s conception of human nature is its social character. According to him, the real nature of man is the totality of social relation. There is no such thing as individual human nature. The Existentialists did not accept any essential

human nature in the traditional sense. Rather they insist that every individual creates his or her own nature through the free, responsible choices and actions. There is nothing like a fixed rational nature and a fixed purpose of humans. According to modern empirical scientist the only way to arrive at a true theory of human nature is the empirical and scientific study of human behavior/biological nature etc.

Social and political problems around the world exclaim something for a better understanding of human nature. The concept of human nature tries to breaks down the boundaries between the sciences and humanities. If there is nothing inviolable about human nature, there is no reason why it should be radically changed. It means there should be with proper reasons and with proper caution. Finally, as it has been mentioned above, it can be noticed that the questions surrounding human nature remain unresolved to a large extent. It is also found that the complicated nature of the human experience lends us neither to a clear and convincing theory of human nature, nor to a satisfactory moral philosophy, which according to most thinkers rests on corresponding metaphysical principles.

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